

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7805
INFO AMEMBASSY IALAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 3577

CINCPAC: FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, AF
SUBJECT: QUOTES FROM CHAIRMAN TARAKI

REF: KABUL 3372

1. SUMMARY. THE REFTEL PRESENTED BASIC BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON PRIME MINISTER NUR AHMAD TARAKI AND HIS CAREER. THIS MESSAGE FOCUSSES MORE ON WHAT WE KNOW OF HIS PAST POLITICAL VIEWS AND HOW THESE OPINIONS MIGHT AFFECT THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF AFGHANISTAN. OBVIOUSLY, MANY OF THESE STATEMENTS ARE DATED, AND MAY HAVE BEEN SELF-SERVING AND DELIBERATELY MISLEADING AT THE TIME THEY WERE MADE. NEVERTHELESS, THEY CONSTITUTE THE BULK OF THE EVIDENCE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE REGARDING THE NEW AFGHAN LEADER'S THINKING, AND THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT TARAKI MAY STILL ADHERE TO THESE VIEWS IN SOME FORM. END
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OF SUMMARY.

2. TARAKI'S ATTITUDES TOWARD ISLAM: A KEY ELEMENT OF THE KHALQ PARTY'S EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A LEFTIST REGIME IN AFGHANISTAN WILL BE THE PARTY'S ABILITY TO RECONCILE ITS BRAND OF COMMUNISM CUM SOCIALISM WITH THE DEEP-SEATED BELIEF IN ISLAM HELD BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF THIS COUNTRY'S POPULATION. IN THE COURSE OF

SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS DURING THE 1960'S, TARAKI CONSISTENTLY INSISTED THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE NOT "CONTRARY TO ISLAM." FURTHERMORE, HE ONCE STATED THAT A "KAFFIR" (NON-BELIEVER IN ISLAM) COULD NEVER RULE AFGHANISTAN.

3. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: IN THE OPINION OF THOSE OFFICERS WHO TALKED WITH HIM IN THE PAST, TARAKI STEADFASTLY EXPRESSED A BELIEF IN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. AT ONE POINT, HE STATED THAT THIS PRINCIPLE IS THE "YARDSTICK BY WHICH ONE CAN MEASURE A GOVERNMENT'S BELIEF IN DEMOCRACY." TARAKI, INCIDENTALLY, HAS HAD A JOURNALISTIC BACKGROUND.

4. PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM-LENINISM: THERE IS RELATIVELY SCANT INFORMATION AVAILABLE REGARDING TARAKI'S PHILOSOPHICAL BENT, BUT THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SOON AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFGHAN COMMUNIST PARTY (THE KHALQ) IN 1965, TARAKI AND HIS COHORT BABRAK KARMAL (NOW VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND A DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) HAD A FALLING-OUT OVER THE CORRECT APPROACH TO THE "CLASS STRUGGLE." TARAKI REPORTEDLY INSISTED THAT THE KHALQ SHOULD BE A WORKING CLASS PARTY," BUILT UP GRADUALLY BEFORE IT ENGAGED IN ANY POLITICAL *58;856. BABRAK, ON THE OTHER HAND, ADVOCATED A "CLASS ALLIANCE" APPROACH WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE PARTY TO ENGAGE IN POLITICS IMMEDIATELY. THROUGHOUT THE 1960S, TARAKI INSISTED HE WAS NOT A MARXIST-LENINIST, AND POSTULATED ONCE, "WHERE IS THE PROLETARIAT IN AFGHANISTAN?" HE ALSO STATED, "WE WILL NEVER BE
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COMMUNISTS; HOW COULD WE HERE WHERE ISLAM IS SO STRONG?"

5. ETHNIC MINORITIES: TARAKI'S PAST VIEWS ON SOME ETHNIC MINORITIES IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE BEEN SPRINKLED WITH EXPRESSIONS OF EXTREME VEHEMENCE. AT ONE TIME HE SAID THAT "HAZARAS ARE NOT AFGHANS" (HAZARAS ARE AN ETHNIC MONGOLOID GROUP WHICH BASICALLY INHABITS THE CENTRAL REGION OF THE COUNTRY, AND OCCUPIES THE LOWEST RUNG ON THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL LADDER). FURTHERMORE, THEY ARE "TRAITORS, SCUM, REACTIONARIES, AND ABOVE ALL, BRITISH AGENTS." HE ADDED THAT "HAZARAS, AND JEWS IN THE BAZAAR, ARE ENEMIES OF THE COUNTRY." ALTHOUGH THESE VIEWS MAY IN FACT BE OUTDATED, IF TARAKI STILL HARBORS SUCH STRONG AND NEGATIVE OPINIONS OF AT LEAST ONE GROUP OF AFGHAN SOCIETY, HE MAY ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTY CONVINCING THE MASSES THAT HIS REGIME ADVOCATES A TRULY CLASS-LESS SOCIETY. TARAKI HIMSELF BELONGS TO THE DOMINANT PUSHTUN ETHNIC GROUP, WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN REGARDED AS OPPRESSORS BY OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS IN AFGHANISTAN.

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CINCPAC: FOR POLAD

6. THE MONARCHY AND THE ELITE: THERE ARE NUMEROUS INDICATIONS OF TARAQI'S ENMITY TOWARD THE MAN HE OVERTHREW, MOHAMMAD DAOUD. THIS MAY HAVE STEMMED FROM PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CLASHES BETWEEN THE TWO OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS (DAOUD WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN TARAQI'S DEPARTURE FROM HIS JOB AT THE AFGHAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON IN 1953). TARAQI AT TIMES, HOWEVER, EXPRESSED EXTREME DISLIKE FOR THE INSTITUTION OF THE MONARCHY, AND IN HIS EYES DAOUD, PERHAPS EVEN MORE THAN THE KING, MAY HAVE SYMBOLIZED A FORM OF RULE CONTRARY TO TARAQI'S OWN BELIEFS. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, TARAQI PROFESSED ADMIRATION FOR THE "ONLY LOYAL AFGHAN KING, AMMANULLAH," A REASONABLY PROGRESSIVE MONARCH WHOSE INNOVATIONS LED TO HIS DOWNFALL IN 1929, AND THE EVENTUAL ACCESSION OF KING NADER SHAH AND THE YAHYA KHEL LINE OF THE MOHAMMADZAI (INCLUDING KING ZAHIR AND AOUD). THE VITRIOL IN SOME OF THIS REGIME'S STATEMENTS AIMED AT NADER'S LINE COULD STEM FROM TARAQI'S BELIEF THAT NADER AND HIS BROTHERS

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WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN OVERTHROWING AMMANULLAH (A SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED AT THE TIME TARAQI WAS ABOUT 12 OR 13).

7. RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES: A KEY ELEMENT IN THE COMING MONTHS, OF COURSE, WILL BE THE EMERGENCE OF TARAKI'S LINKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. AS FOR HIS PAST OPINIONS OF THE USSR, INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE IS LIMITED, AND CONTAINS ONLY HIS BRIEF REFERENCE IN 1967 THAT THE SOVIET UNION HE SAW DURING A TRIP IN 1966 WAS A "WELL-DEVELOPED COUNTRY, AND A NICE PLACE." TARAKI REPORTEDLY MANIFESTED "A DEEP HATRED FOR THE BRITISH" IN THE PAST, AND HE COMMENTED ONCE THAT WAS "IMPOSSIBLE." REGARDING THE UNITED STATES, TARAKI HAS STATED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD DEAL MORE WITH THE "PEOPLE," RATHER THAN WITH GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS WHO "DO NOT REPRESENT THE PEOPLE." HE ONCE ASKED RHETORICALLY "WHY DOESN'T THE UNITED STATES HELP POOR COUNTRIES REGARDLESS OF THE NATURE OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT?" AS FOR AMERICAN AID EFFORTS, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN AT ONE POINT THAT HE U.S WOULD CUT OFF AID TO MANY COUNTRIES, WHICH WOULD "FORCE THEM INTO THE COMMUNIST ORBIT."

8. PUSHTUNISTAN: AS REFLECTED IN INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE, TARAKI HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE, BUT HE HAS NOT BEEN OBSESSED WITH IT. HE HAS STATED, HOWEVER, THAT "SELF-DETERMINATION IS THE ONLY ANSWER," BUT HE VIRTUALLY ALWAYS INCLUDED THE AFGHAN PUSHTUNS IN THIS CONCEPT AS WELL AS THE PATHANS OF THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER. THE DAOUD REGIME ALWAYS EXCLUDED ITS OWN PUSHTUNS FROM THE PUSHTUNISTAN CONCEPT.

9. COMMENT: THE MAN WHO EMERGES FROM THESE REMARKS IS ONE WHO IS APPARENTLY COMMITTED TO HIS OWN BRAND OF IDEOLOGY, BUT ONE WHO IS PERHAPS LESS DOGMATIC THAN HE IS PRAGMATIC. WHATEVER HIS PRESENT VIEWS OF THE WORLD AND THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN MAY BE -- AND THEY WILL PROBABLY EMERGE ONLY
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GRADUALLY OVER THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS -- THERE ARE HINTS THAT HE MAY WISH TO RETAIN SOME FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AND THAT HE MAY NOT WANT THIS COUNTRY TO BECOME A COMPLETE SATELLITE OF ITS GIANT NORTHERN NEIGHBOR. PERSONALLY, TARAKI COULD BE LUKEWARM RE PUSHTUNISTAN, BUT THE KHALQ HAS BEEN IN BED FOR YEARS WITH THE PUSHTUNISTAN NATIONALISTS, WHICH MIGHT TIE TARAKI'S HANDS, AND MIGHT MEAN DIFFICULTIES AHEAD FOR AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS. DOMESTICALLY, TARAKI APPEARS TO HAVE REALIZED LONG AGO THE DIFFICULTIES A LEFTIST REGIME WOULD HAVE IN THIS DEVOUT ISLAMIC COUNTRY. IT IS UNKNOWN WHETHER HE FEELS SUFFICIENTLY CONFIDENT NOW THAT HE CAN PURSUE A DOGMATIC MARXIST LINE, A COURSE WHICH WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SPAWN GREAT MISGIVINGS AMONG THE MASSES. HIS CONTEMPT FOR THE MONARCHY AND DAOUD IS OBVIOUS, AND IT HAS MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE REIME'S NATIONALIZATION OF THE PROPERTY OF ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE NADER SHAH LINE OF THE MOHAMMADZAIS, NOT TO MENTION THE BRUTAL END OF DAOUD AND HIS FAMILY. IN THIS REGARD, HE ONCE STATED THAT THE FIRST THING HE WOULD DO IF HE GAINED

POWER WOULD BE TO "CONFISCATE ALL THE LAND OF THAT BASTARD DAOUD." WE ARE NOT HOLDING OUR BREATH RE TARAKI'S VERSION OF "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS;" BUT IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW HE RECONCILES HIS STATEMENTS WITH HIS ACTIONS. TARAKI'S VIEWS OF THE ETHNIC MINORITIES IN AFGHANISTAN COULD BE THE MOST OMINOUS -- AND NOT TYPICAL OF A COMMUNIST LEADER. IF THIS PREJUDICE WERE TO BE SOMEHOW MANIFESTED IN THIS REGIME'S PROGRAMS, DISTURBANCES COULD BE SPARKED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH THE CENTRAL AUTHORITIES MIGHT FIND EMBARRASSING AND DIFFICULT TO CONTROL.

10. IN SUM, TARAKI BY NO MEANS SEEMS TO BE ANOTHER LENIN, TITO, OR EVEN CASTRO. HE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD NO OVERALL PLAN FOR GOVERNING IF AND WHEN A REVOLUTION OCCURRED, AND THE RAPID-BREAKING EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK APPEAR TO HAVE CAUGHT THE KHALQ LEADERSHIP OFF GUARD, IF ONLY IN THIS PARTICULAR SENSE, WE HASTEN TO ADD. NEVERTHELESS, TARAKI IS IN POWER NOW, AND WE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO FORMULATE AND PUBLICIZE A GRAND DESIGN
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SOON, LEST HE RUN THE RISK THAT OTHERS -BOTH AFGHAN AND FOREIGN - MAKE SUCH A FORMULATION FOR HIM.
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